

CONDO ORGANIZATION OF S. SIERRA AVENUE (COOSSA)

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Solana Beach, CA 92075

June 19, 2001

California Resources Agency
ATTN: Brian Baird, Ocean Program Manager
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 98514

Re: Draft Policy on Coastal Erosion Planning and Response

Dear Mr. Baird,

Our organization represents approximately 900 homes here on the ocean bluff in Solana Beach so we are extremely concerned that state policy reflect a safe protective policy on coastal erosion, rather than an abandon destructive policy some organizations advocate.

We think it is important to see how we got to the severe problem on local erosion that we have today with facts not hypothesis. For the last century, the pattern has been winter storms remove six to eight feet of sand from our local beaches and the spring and summer waves wash it back up on the beach. Why this is not happening now no one seems to know, but what we do know is that sand is sitting off the coast on a sand bar waiting for someone to pump it back on the beach. This replenishment area is where the policy should place the emphasis since it solves all the erosion problems. Not only does it provide a wide beach for the public enjoyment, but it moves the ocean's destructive force away from the fragile bluffs. This then negates, in most cases, the requirement for structural bluff support. Another area, together with sand replenishment, that should be addressed by the State policy is sand retention. There are studies that have been done here in California and elsewhere that define how headlands, jetties, reefs and similar devices can be used successfully to retain sand and not disturb the environment.

There are organizations in the state that claim the main reason they object to the construction of seawalls and filling of sea caves is that they escalate the erosion of the beach. They state that there are studies that document this destruction. The truth is that they were not studies, but suppositions that some scientists espoused, which later turned out not to be true. Professor Gary Griggs did the only real study that I am aware of at the University of California in

Santa Cruz. His study showed that there was no appreciable difference in sand (beach) loss if the bluffs were sandstone or concrete. The waves could not tell the difference. There are many other factors that influence wave action and beach erosion, but the material makeup of the bluff is not one of them. There are numerous examples along the California coast, and here in Solana Beach, where the widest beach is in front of the largest seawall built over twenty years ago. The facts are that fixed shoreline structures **DO NOT** contribute to active or passive erosion. There are nationally recognized scientists from the Scripps Institute of Oceanography here in San Diego that also support this position on beach erosion.

Letting the bluffs erode under private property and homes that the state allowed to be built, would be a potentially dangerous and most certainly an illegal policy. Beaches would be closed for years, and some never reopened, because of real public safety factors. Advanced nations around the world and the Federal Government of the United States have policies that protect property from the forces of nature. Some countries, such as Holland, have structures built along their entire coast to protect their very existence. The Army Corps of Engineers has build and maintains two thousand miles of levee along the Mississippi River to protect private and public property. The State of California has responsibility to maintain the levee for the Sacramento Delta to protect precious private and public land. Is this wrong, should government back away from its responsibility and let nature take its course? The Federal Government does not think so - Congress has recently appropriated money to allow the Army Corps of Engineers to study beach erosion here in California and to make recommendations to restore the beach and save private and public property.

Certainly, the policy of the State of California should support this effort and not allow any precious coastal land to be lost unnecessarily. "Support the Bluff" should be the state motto in this area - not "Let's watch the bluff disappear" as some people advocate, and let the hope and dreams of its residents vanish with it. No government policy should ever support this type of destruction. Cost for support of the bluff is paid for by private property owners, cost for its destruction can only be measured by sorrow, despair and lack of trust in the government that let it happen. Most of the bluff property along the coast is owned by private property that extends to the mean high tide line. Private citizens should have the right to protect their property and at the same time make it possible to have a safe beach for public use. If the bluffs collapse and people are killed because no reasonable means were employed to correct a dangerous situation, who is going to assume responsibility? The private citizen homeowner that tried to

prevent it, or the government that let it happen? No individual perception of aesthetic appearance should be considered when safety of life is concerned. Certainly, no rational thinking people would think this type of protection could be wrong.


We cannot go back and blow up the dams, return all rivers and streams to their natural path, remove all development including roads and freeways that block the normal path of sand to our beaches. But we can protect our bluffs and make the beach below a safe recreational area at no cost to the tax payers. We can easily help nature by putting sand on our beaches, and keep the rising tide from claiming more of our precious land. The oceans already have claimed over 70% of our earth surface. Let's take a stand and protect what we have left, and not give in to extremists who have their own warped idea that we protect the environment by letting nature destroy what man has the God given ability to save.

The paradox that we see in the argument against bluff support structures is that the organizations that support letting the bluff collapse, actually say they want to preserve these same elements for future generations. How can we protect and preserve something and at the same time support its destruction?

A large proportion of our residents are retired people living on fixed income with a major portion of their resources tied up in their bluff top homes. They are placing their future on your Agency's policy that should allow them the same right of all citizens to protect their investment in the future.

Hopefully cooler heads with rational minds will set the policy to protect all coastal resources including private property.

Sincerely,


J. D. MCGOLDRICK
Chairman